

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel Claims 2, 6-7, 12-13 and 26-29 without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter recited therein.

Please amend Claims 1, 8 and 11 as follows.

1. (Currently Amended) An image synthesis method comprising:
 - an input step, of inputting a plurality of image data representing a plurality of images;
 - a placement information generating step, of generating placement information about the horizontal and vertical placement direction of the plurality of images, determined by the horizontal and vertical placement direction of the plurality of images represented by the image data inputted in the input step;
 - a placement information obtaining step, of obtaining the placement information about a plurality of images in which adjacent images have a common subject region;
 - a setting step, of automatically selecting and setting one mapping mode out of a plurality of mapping modes, each mapping mode corresponding to a different mapping surface, without a user intervening to determine the mapping mode or the corresponding mapping surface, in accordance with the horizontal and vertical placement direction of the plurality of images having a common subject region obtained in the placement information obtaining step;

a synthesis step, of combining the plurality of images by using the mapping mode set in the setting step;

a changing step, of changing the mapping mode; and

a generating step, of issuing, when an image formed by changing the mapping mode in the changing step does not comply with a predetermined condition set in accordance with the mapping mode, a warning and generating and displaying a synthesized image in accordance with the predetermined condition, the warning being issued in a case in which the synthesized image exceeds a predetermined angle of view while simultaneously generating and displaying the synthesized image within the predetermined range of viewing angle.

Claims 2-4. (Cancelled).

5. (Previously Presented) An image synthesis method according to Claim 1, further comprising a displaying step, of displaying a cuttable rectangular region without a margin in the synthesized image.

Claims 6 and 7. (Cancelled).

8. (Currently Amended) An image synthesis apparatus ~~according to Claim 6, comprising:~~

inputting means for inputting a plurality of image data representing a plurality of images;

placement information generating means for generating placement information about horizontal and vertical placement direction of the plurality of images, determined by the horizontal and vertical placement direction of the plurality of images represented by the image data inputted by the inputting means;

placement information obtaining means for obtaining the placement information about a plurality of images in which adjacent images have a common subject region;

setting means for automatically selecting and setting one mapping mode out of a plurality of mapping modes, each mapping mode corresponding to a different mapping surface, without a user intervening to determine the mapping mode or the corresponding mapping surface, in accordance with the horizontal and vertical placement direction of the plurality of images having a common subject region obtained by the placement information obtaining means;

synthesis means for combining the plurality of images by using the mapping mode set by the setting means;

further comprising changing means for changing the mapping mode;

generating means for issuing, when an image formed by changing the mapping mode by the changing means does not comply with a predetermined condition set in accordance with the mapping mode, a warning and generating and displaying a synthesized image in accordance with the predetermined condition, the warning being issued in a case in

which the synthesized image exceeds a predetermined angle of view while simultaneously generating and displaying the synthesized image within the predetermined range of viewing angle; and

display means for displaying a cuttable rectangular region without a margin in the synthesized image.

Claims 9 and 10. (Cancelled).

11. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable storage medium having recorded thereon a program for implementing a computer-implementable image synthesis method for combining a plurality of images, the program comprising:

an input step, of inputting a plurality of image data representing a plurality of images;

a placement information generating step, of generating placement information about the horizontal and vertical placement direction of the plurality of images, determined by the horizontal and vertical placement direction of the plurality of images represented by the image data inputted in the input step;

a placement information obtaining step, of obtaining the placement information about a plurality of images in which adjacent images have a common subject region;

a setting step, of automatically selecting and setting one mapping mode out of a plurality of mapping modes, each mapping mode corresponding to a different mapping

surface, without a user intervening to determine the mapping mode or the corresponding mapping surface, in accordance with the horizontal and vertical placement direction of the plurality of images having a common subject region obtained in the placement information obtaining step;

a synthesis step, of combining the plurality of images by using the mapping mode set in the setting step;

a changing step, of changing the mapping mode; and

a generating step, of issuing, when an image formed by changing the mapping mode in the changing step does not comply with a predetermined condition set in accordance with the mapping mode, a warning and generating and displaying a synthesized image in accordance with the predetermined condition, the warning being issued in a case in which the synthesized image exceeds a predetermined angle of view while simultaneously generating and displaying the synthesized image within the predetermined range of viewing angle.

Claims 12-29. (Cancelled).